Diligence is to Magic as Progress is to Flight

With an elephant to ride upon—"with rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,"
she shall outdistance calamity anywhere she goes.
Speed is not in her mind inseparable from carpets. Locomotion arose
in the shape of an elephant; she clambered up and chose
to travel laboriously. So far as magic carpets are concerned, she
knows
that although the semblance of speed may attach to scarecrows
of aesthetic procedure, the substance of it is embodied in such of
those
tough-grained animals as have outstripped man's whim to suppose
them ephemera, and have earned that fruit of their ability to endure
blows,
which dubs them prosaic necessities—not curios.

To a Snail

If "compression is the first grace of style,"
you have it. Contractility is a virtue
as modesty is a virtue.
It is not the acquisition of any one thing
that is able to adorn,
or the incidental quality that occurs
as a concomitant of something well said,
that we value in style,
but the principle that is hid:
in the absence of feet, "a method of conclusions";
"a knowledge of principles,"
in the curious phenomenon of your occipital horn.
The Monkey Puzzler

A kind of monkey or pine-lemur
not of interest to the monkey,
but to the animal higher up which resembles it,
in a kind of Flaubert's Carthage, it defies one—
this "Paduan cat with lizard," this "tiger in a bamboo thicket."
"An interwoven somewhat," it will not come out.
Ignore the Foo dog and it is forthwith more than a dog,
itself superimposed upon itself in a complacent half spiral,
incidentally so witty;
but this pine-tree—this pine-tiger, is a tiger, not a dog.
It knows that if a nomad may have dignity,
Gibraltar has had more—
that "it is better to be lonely than unhappy."
A conifer contrived in imitation of the glyptic work of jade and
hard stone cutters,
a true curio in this bypath of curio collecting,
it is worth its weight in gold but no one takes it
from these woods in which society's not knowing is colossal,
the lion's ferocious chrysanthenum head seeming kind in
comparison.
This porcupine-quilled, infinitely complicated starkness—
this is beauty—"a certain proportion in the skeleton which gives
the best results."
One is at a loss, however, to know why it should be here,
in this morose part of the earth—
to account for its origin at all;
but we prove, we do not explain our birth.

Poetry

I too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this
fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers
that there is in
it after all, a place for the genuine.
Hands that can grasp, eyes
that can dilate, hair that can rise
if it must, these things are important not because a
high sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because they are
useful; when they become so derivative as to become unintelligible,
the same thing may be said for all of us, that we
do not admire what
we cannot understand: the bat,
holding on upside down or in quest of something to
eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless wolf
under
a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a horse that feels
a flea, the base-
ball fan, the statistician—
nor is it valid
to discriminate against "business documents and
school-books"; all these phenomena are important. One must make
a distinction
however: when dragged into prominence by half poets, the result
is not poetry,
nor till the poets among us can be
"literalists of
the imagination"—above
insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in them, shall we have
it. In the meantime, if you demand on one hand,
the raw material of poetry in
all its rawness and
The Past is the Present

If external action is eftete
and rhyme is outmoded,
I shall revert to you,
Habakkuk, as on a recent occasion I was goaded
into doing, by XY, who was speaking of unrhymed verse.
This man said—I think that I repeat
his identical words:
"Hebrew poetry is
prose with a sort of heightened consciousness. 'Ecstasy affords
the occasion and expediency determines the form."
My Apish Cousins

winked too much and were afraid of snakes. The zebras, supreme in their abnormality; the elephants with their fog-colored skin and strictly practical appendages
were there, the small cats; and the parakeet—
trivial and humdrum on examination, destroying bark and portions of the food it could not eat.

I recall their magnificence, now not more magnificent than it is dim. It is difficult to recall the ornament, speech, and precise manner of what one might call the minor acquaintances twenty years back; but I shall not forget him—that Gilgamesh among the hairy carnivora—that cat with the
wedge-shaped, slate-gray marks on its forelegs and the resolute tail, astringently remarking: "They have imposed on us with their pale half fledged protestations, trembling about in inarticulate frenzy, saying
it is not for us to understand art; finding it all so difficult, examining the thing

as if it were inconceivably arcane, as symmetrically frigid as if it had been carved out of chrysoprase or marble—strict with tension, malignant in its power over us and deeper than the sea when it proffers flattery in exchange for hemp, rye, flax, horses, platinum, timber, and fur."

Roses Only

You do not seem to realise that beauty is a liability rather than an asset—that in view of the fact that spirit creates form we are justified in supposing that you must have brains. For you, a symbol of the unit, stiff and sharp, conscious of surpassing by dint of native superiority and liking for everything self-dependent, anything an ambitious civilization might produce: for you, unaided to attempt through sheer reserve, to confute presumptions resulting from observation, is idle. You cannot make us think you a delightful happen-so. But rose, if you are brilliant, it is not because your petals are the without-which-nothing of pre-eminence. You would, minus thorns, look like a what-is-this, a mere peculiarity. They are not proof against a worm, the elements, or mildew but what about the predatory hand? What is brilliance without co-ordination? Guarding the infinitesimal pieces of your mind, compelling audience to the remark that it is better to be forgotten than to be remembered too violently, your thorns are the best part of you.
described by my
trunk; nevertheless, I
perceive feats of strength to be inexplicable after
all; and I am on my guard; external poise, it

has its center
well nurtured—we know
where—in pride, but spiritual poise, it has its center where?
My ears are sensitized to more than the sound of

the wind. I see
and I hear, unlike the
wandlike body of which one hears so much, which was made
to see and not to see; to hear and not to hear;

that tree trunk without
roots, accustomed to shout
its own thoughts to itself like a shell, maintained intact
by one who knows what strange pressure of the atmosphere; that

spiritual
brother to the coral
plant, absorbed into which, the equable sapphire light
becomes a nebulous green. The I of each is to

the I of each,
a kind of fretful speech
which sets a limit on itself; the elephant is?
Black earth preceded by a tendril? It is to that

phenomenon
the above formation,
translucent like the atmosphere—a cortex merely—that on which darts cannot strike decisively the first

time, a substance
needful as an instance
of the indestructibility of matter; it
has looked at the electricity and at the earth-
quake and is still
here; the name means thick. Will
depth be depth, thick skin be thick, to one who can see no
beautiful element of unreason under it?

Radical

Tapering
to a point, conserving everything,
this carrot is predestined to be thick.
The world is
but a circumstance, a miserable corn-patch for its feet. With ambition, imagination, outgrowth,
nutriment,
with everything crammed belligerently inside itself, its fibers breed monopoly—
a tail-like, wedge-shaped engine with the secret of expansion, fused with intensive heat to color of the set-
ing sun and
stiff. For the man in the straw hat, standing still and turning to look back at it, as much as
to say my happiest moment has been funereal in comparison with this, the conditions of life pre-
determined
slavery to be easy and freedom hard. For it? Dismiss
agrarian lore; it tells him this:
that which it is impossible to force, it is impossible to hinder.
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ON THE TEXT

forms as closely as is now possible to the author's final
five of the poems written after the first printing of
have been included. Late authorized corrections, and
actions authorized but not made, have been incorpo-
rating, hyphens, and line arrangements silently
ditor, proofreader, or typesetter have been restored.
ditorial amplifications of the notes have been removed.

Clive Driver

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the yellow and the crab-claw blue ones with green bracts—
    toad-plant,
petunias, ferns; pink lilies, blue
    ones, tigers; poppies; black sweet-peas.
The climate

is not right for the banyan, frangipani, the
    jack-fruit tree; nor for exotic serpent
life. Ring lizard and snake-skin for the foot if you see fit,
but here they've cats not cobras to
    keep down the rats. The diffident
little newt

with white pin-dots on black horizontal spaced
    out bands lives here; yet there is nothing that
ambition can buy or take away. The college student
named Ambrose sits on the hill-side
    with his not-native books and hat
and sees boats

at sea progress white and rigid as if in
    a groove. Liking an elegance of which
the source is not bravado, he knows by heart the antique
sugar-bowl shaped summer-house of
    interlacing slats, and the pitch
of the church

spire, not true, from which a man in scarlet lets
    down a rope as a spider spins a thread;
he might be part of a novel, but on the sidewalk a
sign says C. J. Poole, Steeple-jack,
    in black and white; and one in red
and white says

Danger. The church portico has four fluted
    columns, each a single piece of stone, made
modestier by white-wash. This would be a fit haven for
waifs, children, animals, prisoners,
    and presidents who have repaid
sin-driven

senators by not thinking about them. There
are a school-house, a post-office in a

store, fish-houses, hen-houses, a three-masted schooner on
the stocks. The hero, the student,
    the steeple-jack, each in his way,
is at home.

It could not be dangerous to be living
    in a town like this, of simple people,
who have a steeple-jack placing danger signs by the church
while he is gilding the solid-
    pointed star, which on a steeple
stands for hope.

The Student

"In America everybody must have a degree," the French man
says, "but the French do not think that all can have it; they don't
say everyone must go to college." We
may feel as he says we do; five kinds of superiority

might be unattainable by all, but one degree is not too much.
In each school there is a pair of fruit-trees like that twin tree
    in every other school: tree-of-knowledge—
    tree-of-life—each with a label like that of the other college:

lux, or lux et veritas, Christo et ecclesiae, sapient
    felici, and if science confirms immortality,
these apple-trees should be for everyone.
Oriental arbor vitae we say lightly. Yet you pardon

it as when one thinking of the navy does not know not to infer
dishonorable discharge from a D. D. It is a
thoughtful pupil has two thoughts for the word
valet; or for bachelor, child, damsel; though no one having heard
them used as terms of chivalry would make the medieval use of
them. Secluded from domestic strife, Jack Bookworm led a
college life says Goldsmith. He might not say
    it of the student who shows interest in the stranger's resumé
by asking "when will your experiment be finished, Doctor Einstein?"
and is pleased when Doctor Einstein smiles and says politely
"science is never finished." But we're not
hypocrites, we're rustics. The football huddle in the vacant lot
is impersonating calculus and physics and military
books; and is gathering the data for genetics. If
scholarship would profit by it, sixteen-
foot men should be grown; it's for the football men to say.
We must lean

on their experience. There is vitality in the world of sport.
If it is not the tree of knowledge, it's the tree of life.
When Audubon adopted us he taught
us how to dance. It was the great crab-flounder of Montana caught
and changed from that which creeps to that which is angelic.
He taught us how
to turn as the airport wind-sock turns without an error;
like Alligator, Downpour, Dynamite,
and Wotan, gliding round the course in a fast neat school,
with the white

of the eye showing; or as sea-lions keep going round and round the
pool. But there is more to learn—the difference between cow
and zebu; lion, tiger; barred and brown
owls; horned owls have one ear that opens up and one that opens
down.

The golden eagle is the one with feathered legs. The penguin wing is
ancient, not degenerate. Swordfish are different from
gars, if one may speak of gars when the big
gamehunters are using the fastidious singular—say pig,

and that they have seen camelsparrow, tigerhorse, rat, mouse,

butterfly,

snake, elephant, fruit-bat, et cef‘ra. No fact of science—
theology or biology—might
not as well be known; one does not care to hold opinions that

fright

could dislocate. Education augments our natural forces and
prompts us to extend the machinery of advantage
to those who are without it. One fitted
to be a scholar must have the heroic mind, Emerson said.

The student concentrates and does not like to fight;
“gives his opinion
firmly and rests on it”—in the manner of the poet;

is reclusive, and reserved; and has such
ways, not because he has no feeling but because he has so much.

Boasting provokes jibes, and in this country we’ve no cause to boast;
we are

as a nation perhaps, undergraduates not students.
But anyone who studies will advance.
Are we to grow up or not? They are not all college boys in France.

The Hero

Where there is personal liking we go.
Where the ground is sour; where there are
weeds of beanstalk height,

snakes’ hypodermic teeth, or
the wind brings the “scarebabe voice”
from the neglected yew set with
the semi-precious cat’s eyes of the owl—
awake, asleep, “raised ears extended to fine points,” and so

on—love won’t grow.

We do not like some things and the hero
doesn’t; deviating head-stones

and uncertainty;
going where one does not wish
to go; suffering and not
saying so; standing and listening where something
is hiding. The hero shrinks

as what it is flies out on muffled wings, with twin yellow
eyes—to and fro—

with quavering water-whistle note, low,

high, in basso-falsetto chirps
until the skin creeps.

Jacob when a-dying, asked
Joseph: Who are these? and blessed
both sons, the younger most, vexing Joseph. And

Joseph was vexing to some.

Cincinnatus was; Regulus; and some of our fellow
men have been, though

devout, like Pilgrim having to go slow
to find his roll; tired but hopeful—
senators by not thinking about them. One
sees a school-house, a post-office in a
store, fish-houses, hen-houses, a three-masted schooner on
the stocks. The hero, the student,
the steeple-jack, each in his way,
is at home.

It scarcely could be dangerous to be living
in a town like this, of simple people
who have a steeple-jack placing danger-signs by the church
when he is gilding the solid-
pointed star, which on a steeple
stands for hope.

The Student

COLLECTED: WAY, ComP, in the following version:

The Student

"In America," began
the lecturer, "everyone must have a
degree. The French do not think that
all can have it, they don't say everyone
must go to college." We
do incline to feel
that although it may be unnecessary
to know fifteen languages,
one degree is not too much. With us, a
school—like the singing tree of which
the leaves were mouths singing in concert—is
both a tree of knowledge
and of liberty,—
seen in the unanimity of college
mottoes, lux et veritas,
Christo et ecclesiae, sapient
felici. It may be that we
have not knowledge, just opinions, that we
are undergraduates,
not students; we know
we have been told with smiles, by expatriates

of whom we had asked "When will
your experiment be finished?" "Science
is never finished." Secluded
from domestic strife, Jack Bookworm led a
college life, says Goldsmith;
and here also as
in France or Oxford, study is beset with
dangers,—with bookworms, mildews,
and complaisancies. But someone in New
England has known enough to say
the student is patience personified,
is a variety
of hero, "patient
of neglect and of reproach,"—who can "hold by
himself." You can't beat hens to
make them lay. Wolf's wool is the best of wool,
but it cannot be sheared because
the wolf will not comply. With knowledge as
with the wolf's surliness,
the student studies
voluntarily, refusing to be less
than individual. He
"gives his opinion and then rests on it;"
he renders service when there is
no reward, and is too reclusive for
some things to seem to touch
him, not because he
has no feeling but because he has so much.

The Hero

COLLECTED: SP, ColP, ComP.